A Black Tie Affair

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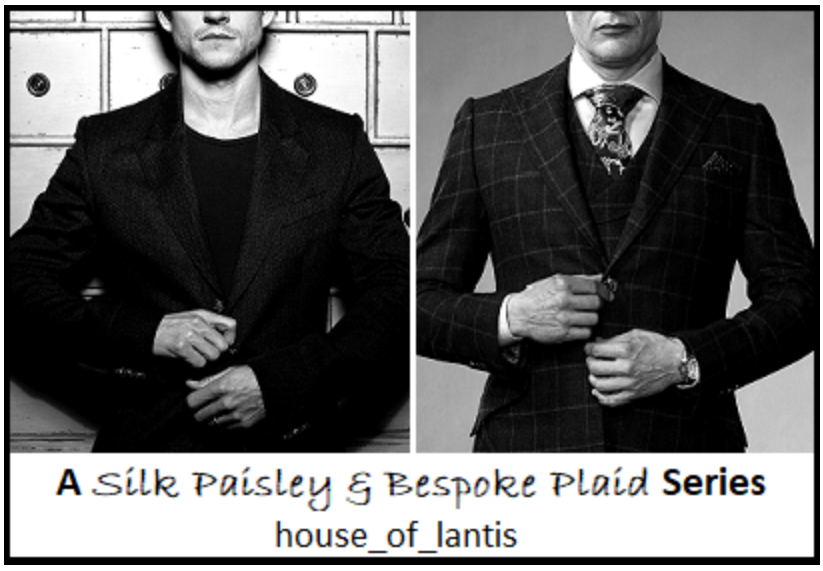
A Black Tie Affair

by house_of_lantis

Summary

Will allows for Hannibal to help him select a tuxedo for the opera fundraiser. Neither has defined what this new turn in their relationship means. Meanwhile, Will discovers an insight to the Chesapeake Ripper that directs him to Hannibal.

Chapter 1



Hannibal Lecter's House

Baltimore, Maryland

Sunday, April 8th

Will sat in his usual seat at the long dining table, on Hannibal's right, and watched as Hannibal brought out two plates, setting one in front of Will with a practiced and subdued flourish.

"To celebrate our outing this evening, a belated *poisson d'Avril* ."

"A French April's Fools Day?"

"One of many interpretations," Hannibal conceded, smiling with delight. "In France, fishing season opens in early April, but the waters are still too cold so the fish are few and challenging to catch."

Will grinned. “I’m a good fisherman.”

“I have no doubt of that,” he said, nodding. “But now, it can be used as an allusion to trying to catch gullible people by luring them with bait.”

“Are you trying to tell me something, Dr. Lecter?”

Hannibal gave him a warm smile full of good humor and teasing. “Another interpretation was made by the 17th century French grammartarian Pierre-Marie Quitard who proclaimed that Christ would return on April 1st.”

“Because early Christians used the symbol of the fish for Christ.”

“Yes.”

“Therefore, the Fish of April,” Will said, looking at his dish. “Whether Fool or Christ, all fleshly bounty would inevitably end up on a hook and here on our plates to feed us.”

Will looked at Hannibal and met his gaze for a long moment. He knew that Hannibal desired him, wanted him, but was maintaining decorum at the table. The lust on his handsome face was so plain that Will found that he returned the desire tenfold.

“Tonight is a simple dish, a classic buttered sole *Meuniere* with a side of seasonal vegetables and pomegranates,” he said, his deep voice full of happiness and pride.

Will looked at the beautiful plating of the simple white fish and grinned up at Hannibal. “Thank you. It smells delicious.”

“Paired with the delightful Chambourcin that you provided,” he said, nodding at Will and pouring the wine into Will’s glass.

Will waited until Hannibal sat down at the head of the table, putting his cloth napkin on his lap. He picked up his wine glass and saluted Hannibal, who raised his glass to Will. The chilled Chambourcin was a vibrant red color and Will appreciated the cool acidic flavor, waking up his taste buds. Will didn't consider himself any kind of wine connoisseur, but at the rate that Hannibal offered him wine with dinner, Will was starting to understand the spectrum of flavors and tastes. In many ways, simply *dining* with Hannibal was changing him.

He took a bite of the sole and nearly groaned at the buttery and citrus flavors of the well prepared fish. It was cooked perfectly and flaky without being too meaty. He closed his eyes to savor the taste, and when he opened his eyes, it was to see Hannibal watching him, dark eyes trained on Will's lips.

"Are you going to watch me eat all night?"

Hannibal took a small bite of his fish and took a sip of his wine. "I enjoy watching you put the food that I prepared into your mouth."

Will chuffed out a soft laugh, looking away. "I didn't know that you did this."

"This?"

"Tease me like this," Will said, frankly. "I've been oblivious this whole time, haven't I?"

Hannibal chuckled, giving him an amused look. "Perhaps not the whole time. There have been many times when I've been quite serious in our interactions."

Will laughed softly, taking another small bite. "Sure."

They ate in companionable silence, the soft sounds of their utensils on Hannibal's porcelain dishes and the soft clink of the wine glass being set on the polished table the only accompanying sounds between them. Will didn't mind; he rathered liked the silences with Hannibal. He liked that Hannibal didn't feel the need to fill it either.

Indubitably, Will's mind was always on high alert, always processing information, and putting together connections even while he was doing something else. So it didn't surprise him that his thoughts would take him to his current case, trying to untangle what he knew of the Ripper to the latest killings.

"You'll have to excuse me if I try to lick the plate. The butter sauce was amazing," Will said, setting his utensils down on his plate and trying to put his racing thoughts aside.

"I'm glad you enjoyed your meal," he said, gazing softly at him.

"More than enjoyed it, Hannibal. Thank you for dinner. Again."

Hannibal leaned back in his chair, exhaling slowly. "It was my pleasure."

Will nodded, folding his napkin and setting it beside his plate on the table. His fingers lingered, playing with the perfectly hemmed edges.

"You've been distracted the last couple of days," Hannibal said, quietly. "Is there something on your mind?"

"This missing organ case," he said, sighing and trying to not feel grateful that Hannibal wanted to listen to him. He grimaced at Hannibal. "Sorry, I just didn't think you'd want to hear about it while we were having dinner."

"Nonsense," Hannibal told him, grinning. "My constitution isn't so fragile that I can't listen to you discuss a case over a meal. Would you like to tell me about it?"

“Everyone thinks it’s another Ripper murder, but some things don’t add up.”

Hannibal nodded, watching Will. “But you don’t believe it’s the Chesapeake Ripper. What was it that set it apart?”

“The Ripper is performance and theater. He’s sadistic and his victims are meaningful to the Ripper in some way. He’s met them, he knows them in some capacity, but that... *intimacy* is missing with these latest victims. The only commonality is that all of the victims are missing their kidney.”

Hannibal took a sip of his wine, looking contemplative. “Despite the urban myth of luring a hapless victim into a back alley hotel to steal a kidney, black market organ trafficking is very real. The going rate of a healthy adult kidney is around $25,000 - higher in some countries, such as the US, where the need is great but in short supply.”

“Have you ever encountered anything like this in your years as a surgeon?”

Hannibal smiled and shook his head. “No. I’ve had to repair, or in some cases, remove damaged organs, but I never encountered a victim who came into the ER with one already missing.”

Somewhere in Hannibal’s grand house, there was a discreet chime of a clock, indicating that it was six o’clock.

“I’ve laid out your new tuxedo in my dressing room,” Hannibal said, pushing his chair out and getting to his feet. “Let me clear the table and I’ll meet you upstairs.”

Will got to his feet as well. “I can help you clear.”

“I would like it if you went upstairs and changed,” he said, picking up their used dishes and utensils.

He chuckled, giving in gracefully. “Okay, fine, but you’ll have to help me tie my bowtie. It’s been years and I don’t remember how to do it now.”

Hannibal gave him a pleased look and nodded. “Of course, Will, it would be my pleasure.”

Will chuckled to himself as he left the dining room, trying not to roll his eyes. As much as he admired Hannibal’s manners, he wished that Hannibal would just...let himself go a little when it was just the two of them. All these formal and proper manners always made Will feel like he was in some historical British drama.

He took the stairs to the second floor and stopped in front of the Japanese Samurai armor that was outside Hannibal’s bedroom. The few times that he was in Hannibal’s bedroom, he hadn’t had the time, or the inclination to be honest, to examine the armour. On closer inspection, it was intricately made and beautiful; art and function in perfect balance. He would need to ask Hannibal about how he had acquired it at a later time.

Hannibal’s bedroom was also art and function in perfect balance. There was still that elegant severity but it was also lived in. Like Hannibal’s well-loved kitchen and dining room, his bedroom felt like an extension of Hannibal, while the rest of the house seemed more like a museum - cold, beautiful, and calculated to impress or to intimidate.

When Hannibal said “dressing room,” Will wasn’t surprised that it actually was an entire room that existed to be Hannibal’s closet. Just next to the door to the master bathroom was a doorway into Hannibal’s massive closet and dressing area. There were rows and rows of immaculately hung suits and dress shirts. There were mahogany cabinets and drawers that held his silk ties and his socks. Even more drawers that held his collection of watches and cufflinks. Cashmere sweaters were folded neatly on shelves by color. His shoes were all polished and placed neatly on stands. There was a whole wall that was a mirror with a free-standing mirror in the corner.

Will saw his dark blue-black tuxedo, shirt, shoes, and bowtie on the mahogany valet stand, waiting for him. It wasn’t bespoke, as Hannibal’s tailor didn’t have enough time to create a personalized tuxedo for him, but he had spent a good three hours being measured by the older

and elegant, no-nonsense Lithuanian woman named Madame Ona Svajone, who had scowled at Hannibal for asking for a Sunday fitting as a special favor to him. Luckily, she had a few pre-made pieces available that she could tailor to Will's measurements in time for the opera fundraiser.

"As a special favor for you, Count Lecter," she said, her handsome face was pinched in disapproval. However, her brown eyes glittered with amusement as she gazed up at him. She nodded her head towards Will. "You are lucky that he's lovely or I wouldn't have wasted a perfectly good Sunday on either of you."

Will smirked, looking over at Hannibal. "Count Lecter?"

Hannibal politely ignored him as he smiled at her, taking her hand and kissing the knuckles. "You honor us, Madame."

She gave a bold laugh and pulled her hand away. "It will be ready three days before the fundraiser. Bring him again for his final fitting."

Will felt like an outsider in their world. "How much do I--"

"We do not speak of money," Ona said, narrowing her eyes at him. "Besides, Count Lecter has already taken care of the bill."

Later, while Will and Hannibal were having a light lunch at a nearby Italian restaurant, Will tried to broach the subject.

"You're not going to let me pay for this, are you?"

Hannibal picked delicately at his salad. "Consider it a gift for accepting my invitation to attend the fundraiser. I feel that I owe it to you since you allowed Ellen to steamroll you into attending with me."

“Are you really a Count?” Will said, hiding his amusement by putting a forkful of pasta into his mouth.

He watched as Hannibal sighed. “Ona and I are both Lithuanian by birth; at one time, many years ago, the Lecter family did have ties to the European royal families. She was merely teasing me because she remembers my family legacy.”

“So, does that mean that you’re in line to a European throne? King Hannibal the First?”

Hannibal gave him a long look and gave up on his salad, politely setting his utensils to the side. “Are you teasing me, Will?”

“Yeah, it’s my turn,” he said, licking his fork indelicately and expressively. He liked watching Hannibal’s dark eyes drift down to stare at Will’s mouth.

Madame Svajone was a genius. Will had never considered that clothes could be anything but simple covering or to be used as a shield. But the tuxedo she made for him fit like a luxurious glove, comfortable in all the right places, and was wool and silk armour, preparing him to enter the battlefield of Baltimore society.

Beside it was Hannibal’s elegant black tuxedo. It was kind of charming to see their clothes side by side. There was a sense of domesticality to it that made Will’s stomach clench, his imagination taking him on a path to where Hannibal would need to extend the dressing room in order to create space for Will’s things. Of course, he didn’t have that much now, but if Hannibal had *carte blanche* , Will knew that he’d have just as many fitted suits and tailored shirts as Hannibal.

Shaking his head of his thoughts, he toed off his shoes and undressed, remembering to fold his clothes neatly and leaving them on the large round ottoman in the center of the room. He pulled off his socks and rolled them, shoving them into his shoes, and then tugged off his white undershirt. No doubt that there would be a new and clean undershirt with his new clothes.

Yep, Will thought, chuckling to himself as he looked through the hangers and saw the white cotton undershirt. Hannibal didn't miss a single detail.

He pulled it off and faced the wall mirror, slipping it on. He kind of enjoyed watching as he got dressed. It was almost as if the old Will was being covered up by a new Will. This new Will wore clothes that fit him perfectly, tailored for him, and tricked out to show off his best assets. He turned a bit to check out his ass in the mirror, chuckling to himself for his vanity.

He opened the drawer, looking at the dozens of cufflinks, wondering which one he could borrow from Hannibal. They were beautifully designed, some modern and artistic, while others were more modest and traditional.

"In all my imagination, I could never predict you, Will."

Will smiled, seeing Hannibal leaning against the doorway, watching him with predatory eyes. "How long have you been standing there?"

"Ever since you turned to check your posterior view."

He laughed, watching as Hannibal walked slowly towards him, each step measured and steady. "And how is my posterior view, Count Lecter?"

"I mean this in the most gentlemanly manner. Delectable." Hannibal said, placing a kiss on Will's neck and running one hand down Will's back to gently cup his ass. "Have you decided on which ones you'd like to wear tonight?"

Will licked his lips and leaned against Hannibal's shoulder. "What would you recommend?"

"The sapphire and onyx will suit you very well," Hannibal said, giving Will's ass a little pat before walking towards his own valet stand.

Will selected the cufflinks and rolled up his French cuffs, setting the cufflinks in. He turned to watch as Hannibal undressed, methodically and efficiently, setting his clothes on the ottoman neatly. Hannibal turned, facing Will, a small smile on his lips, as he performed a slow striptease down to his black briefs.

“Do you like what you see, Will?”

He bit his lower lip and pushed off the side of the cabinet of drawers, prowling around the ottoman to stand in front of Hannibal. They were nearly the same height and Will enjoyed being able to tilt his head slightly to brush his lips against Hannibal’s mouth.

“Yes,” he said, pushing Hannibal so that he was sitting on the ottoman. Will got to his knees and pushed Hannibal’s thighs apart, making room for himself between them. He could see that Hannibal was starting to get hard, the outline of his cock visible under his black briefs.

“Mind the creases on your trousers, please,” Hannibal said, giving him a look.

“You’re going to have something else to think about than the creases of my trousers, Hannibal,” Will said, pulling down the briefs and then actually taking them off of Hannibal. He tossed them on the floor behind him and ran his hands along Hannibal’s thick, muscular thighs, until both of his hands were curled around his cock.

Hannibal’s hand stroked across Will’s check and into his hair. “Will.”

“Tell me when you’re going to come,” Will said, licking up the length of Hannibal’s cock with the flat of his tongue. He grinned when Hannibal inhaled sharply, eyes lowering to Will’s mouth. “We wouldn’t want to get come all over my new clothes, would we?”

He licked around the head, pushing down the foreskin to get to the soft flesh underneath. Hannibal groaned softly, clutching at Will’s shoulder with one hand, leaning back on the ottoman with the other.

“You taste so good, Hannibal,” Will said, keeping his voice low and husky. He raised his eyes to met Hannibal’s unwavering gaze. He grinned and licked around the head, using the tip of his tongue to delicately sweep over the opening, tasting more of Hannibal’s bitter, meaty flavor.

“Will,” Hannibal murmured again, breathing quickly.

“I might be addicted to how you taste,” he said, wrapping his lips around the head and sucking wetly, slurping noisily.

“Will.”

Now, that sounded rather urgent, he noted, pleased. Will glanced up at Hannibal again, smiling around his mouthful. For as elegant and as proper as Hannibal was, Will knew that Hannibal liked it best when he was dirty.

He wrapped his hand around Hannibal’s cock and stroked him as he bobbed his head up and down on his cock, sucking and licking across the tip, giving Hannibal the friction he needed to come. They didn’t have the time to really enjoy it right then. Hannibal wouldn’t want to be late to the fundraiser.

“Will. Yes!” Hannibal said, head flung back, neck muscles standing out as he tensed and groaned.

Will kept up the sucking and the stroking, unable to look away from Hannibal as he worked his hips against the ottoman, thrusting in quick jerks into Will’s hand. He could taste it now, smell Hannibal’s musk, as his hand tightened against Will’s neck as he came in Will’s mouth with a deep, throaty cry that was part pleasure and part relief.

He swallowed quickly, taking all of Hannibal’s come, careful not to get any on his clothes. It really wouldn’t do to go to the fundraiser smelling of come. If anything, Will was going to need to wash his face and his hands again, brush his teeth and gargle; and Hannibal probably needed an actual shower.

Gently, he pulled off of Hannibal's softening cock, giving him a farewell lick, and sat back on his heels to smugly watch as Hannibal caught his breath. He had fallen back on the ottoman and was staring up at the domed ceiling of the dressing room. Will got to his feet and bent over Hannibal, grinning widely.

"You should probably take a quick shower," he suggested, giving Hannibal a wink.

Hannibal sighed, stroking his hand against Will's neck. It was a gentle and appreciative gesture. Will turned his head to kiss the side of his hand.

"We're going to be late to the fundraiser," Hannibal said, defeatedly.

Will couldn't help but laugh, patting Hannibal's lower belly gently with his hand. "Well, I think Baltimore society will understand. After all, you have taken up with a much younger lover."

Hannibal gave him what was probably a dirty look, if Hannibal actually knew how to make such a rude expression. But all it did was make Will laugh, bending down to kiss Hannibal's mouth.

"I shall have to make it up to you later tonight. I promise, Will."

Will grinned. "I know you never break your promises, so I look forward to getting fucked."

Hannibal gave him an exasperated sigh at his coarse language, but he gave Will a fond smile and stroked his hair. "I shall have to punish you for that later as well."

"Like I said, I'm looking forward to it."

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> Please note that this is an AU rewrite of the episode “Sorbet.” There are quite a few lines that are paraphrased and attributed to the TV show writers/creators, but not necessarily in the same context or by the same character. Thanks!

Baltimore Museum of Art

The Fox Court

Later That Night

Will had been to the Baltimore Museum of Art before, but it was always during normal business hours, during the hustle and bustle of museum visitors and children on field trips for school. He wasn’t interested in the arts, but he had interviewed a few of the curators while building a profile of one of the older Ripper cases.

Seeing the museum lit up at night, closed to the general public and opened to only fifty VIP guests, made the museum seem like an appropriate battlefield. It was weird walking through the museum after hours, the sound of their footsteps reverberating through the empty halls. He followed Hannibal up the wide stairs to Fox Court hall. It truly was majestic with its high ceilings and dozens of Greek pillars surrounding the inner space. There were four large circular lights hanging from the ceilings, illuminating the large room with a soft glow. At the far end of the hall was a small stage and a six-piece string orchestra set discreetly to one side. There were only fifty guests with two sections of chairs lined perfectly in the middle of the large hall, close to the raised stage.

They were only a few minutes late, but not so late to cause a disruption with the performance. One of the ushers guided Hannibal and Will to a pair of open chairs in the left section of the seating. Lenora’s voice was beautifully resonant and echoed perfectly in the great hall. She was a tall woman who exuded both femininity and power, and it was just as easy to gaze up at her as it was to listen to her strong voice.

But more than that, it was watching Hannibal's face, his entire attention fixed on the opera singer, eyes bright and face flushed in ecstasy. Will opened himself to feel Hannibal's pleasure in the moment. He closed his eyes and breathed in deeply, feeling the depth of Hannibal's intense adoration for beauty encompass him. Here, inside the resplendent museum, surrounded by the who's who of Baltimore society, and enraptured by Lenora's siren song, Will sensed that Hannibal was barely holding it in, and it was only his tight control that he managed to keep his seat and remain still.

Will opened his eyes to look at Hannibal again and wasn't surprised to see his eyes wet with emotion. He reached over and curled his fingers into Hannibal's hand, squeezing it gently. Hannibal turned to look at him, meeting Will's eyes, the corner of his lips curving into a grateful smile. Hannibal raised their hands and placed a soft kiss on the back of Will's hand, then turned his attention back to Lenora. On the outside, Hannibal displayed an image of cultured manners and control, his voice never rising, his words always exact. But there was a thrum of darkness in him that only came out in his passions - for beauty, for food, for sex - and Will wondered what other dark passions lay inside Hannibal...and if Will wanted to go looking for them.

Later, after Hannibal led the standing ovation, they found their way to the bar and Hannibal collected a glass of champagne for himself and a glass of whiskey for Will.

"Thank you," he said, taking a large sip of the top shelf whiskey to fortify himself for what was to come.

Hannibal grinned at him over his champagne flute, watching Will expectantly. Will knew that Hannibal enjoyed observing him in a multitude of situations, carefully assessing what Will would do or say next. Will knew Hannibal was curious, his brilliant mind probably going through a dozen possibilities, wanting to experience things through Will's eyes. If anyone understood that type of pathological desire, it certainly was Will.

"Have I told you that you look delectable tonight, Will?"

He smirked into his glass and met Hannibal's eyes. Earlier, Hannibal had rushed through a quick shower and they had gotten dressed and ready quickly. Hannibal's normally well-groomed hair was still damp when they left his house, his long ash-blond bangs now dry and loose over his forehead instead of combed back in its usual, controlled style. Will preferred

him like this, a little ruffled, a little less polished; it made Hannibal look approachable and even more attractive.

“Hannibal! Will! Hello, my darlings!”

He turned to see Mrs. Ellen Komeda and her coterie moving across the museum floor towards them.

“Oh Will, it’s so lovely to see you again,” Mrs. Komeda said, greeting him warmly with a kiss to his cheek. She held him by the arms and looked him over, her eyes sharp with approval. “And how wonderful you look tonight.”

“Thank you. You as well,” he said, blushing slightly under her enthusiasm.

“Good evening, Ellen,” Hannibal said, greeting her politely. He shook hands with Dr. Komeda and quickly introduced Will to the people standing around them, all of them eyeing Will curiously. Hannibal kept his hand on Will’s back and Will watched as their eyes followed Hannibal’s hand, understanding dawning on their faces. Will was sure that Hannibal would be fodder for gossip through his social circles. “May I introduce my dear friend, Mr. Will Graham.”

“Dear friend, indeed,” Mrs. Komeda said, coyly.

Will managed to get through the social niceties painlessly, but he maintained a polite distance, trying not to look into the eyes of other people. He didn’t really care if they found him aloof or odd; Will didn’t owe them anything.

“Hannibal, I’m so pleased to see both of you,” she pronounced, her smile edging towards smug pleasure at seeing them together. “Did Will tell you about our lunch last week?”

“Will is a man of his own schedule,” Hannibal said, raising his eyebrow curiously at Will.

He let out a soft laugh. “Well, I did promise to take Ellen to lunch so we went to Aldo’s.”

“The *veal saltimbocca* was to die for,” she said, then looked at Hannibal. “But it’s no match for your feasts.”

Hannibal smiled, nodding his head good-naturedly.

“I feel like Will and I are such old friends now,” she said, smiling up at him, ensnaring him even further into her clutches. Will actually didn’t mind. He liked her. Mrs. Komeda turned to look up at her husband. “Charles, darling, we’ll have to remember to include Will for our annual Christmas bash and arrange for another chair at our table for him.”

“Your wish is my command, dear,” Dr. Komeda said, chuckling. He and Will exchanged looks and Dr. Komeda patted Will on his back. “It’s best to give in gracefully, son. She will have her way, with or without your compliance.”

Will relaxed and gave a small laugh. “Well, then, thank you for thinking of me, Ellen.”

Mrs. Komeda gave a delighted little laugh, meeting Will’s eyes. “It’s my pleasure, dear. As I said before, I’m sure we shall see more of each other in the future.”

Someone caught her attention over Will’s shoulder and she waved her hand in the air. She smiled at Will and nodded to the people around them. “Excuse me, I see Lenora. I will be right back. Will, don’t even think of running off yet.”

“I can’t make any promises,” he said, only half-jokingly. Mrs. Komeda gave him a narrow-eyed look and he smiled, acquiescing.

Hannibal leaned closer to Will, his breath warm against Will’s ear. “It appears that you have gained quite a formidable social patroness, Will.”

Will took a sip of his whiskey and slid his eyes to Hannibal. “I thought you were going to be my social patron.”

“Ellen Komeda rules her kingdom as she likes. We are only mere servants.” Hannibal murmured, amused. “You are in good hands.”

“You’re enjoying this far too much,” he commented, smiling at him.

Mrs. Komeda led Lenora to their group and excitedly made introductions. Lenora smiled, shaking hands and accepting compliments with grace. Will could tell that a great of her work and performance wasn’t just on the stage, it was off the stage as well. He wondered what they were like when they weren’t performing. Or if they were like Hannibal, so embedded in his lifestyle that even when he dined alone, it was still a performance.

“Will and I are happy to host dinner in your honor, Lenora,” Hannibal said, meaningfully.

Will watched as Lenora smiled, nodding her acceptance. Her eyes slid to Will, a look of understanding crossing her face.

“From what I’ve heard of your fabulous dinners, Hannibal, I think I’m the one who is honored to be invited to your table,” she said, graciously.

Mrs. Komeda placed her hand on Hannibal’s arm. “I would be more than happy to help you with your guest list, my dear.”

Will took a polite sip of his whiskey to stop himself from laughing. He glanced at Hannibal to see how he would take Mrs. Komeda hijacking his dinner party, but Hannibal merely smiled affectionately at Mrs. Komeda.

“I would be exceptionally grateful for your help,” Hannibal murmured, pleased.

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FBI Academy

Quantico, Virginia

Thursday, April 12

"Will?"

Will jerked awake, sitting up in his chair. He was disoriented and his back and neck muscles felt tense and sore from sleeping in a bad position. He looked up to see Hannibal looking down at him, concern on his face.

"Hannibal? What're you doing here?" He asked, running his hands over his face, trying to wake up.

"You missed our dinner date," Hannibal said, cupping Will's chin and raising his face so that Hannibal could examine him, his gaze clinical and assessing. Will was sure that if Hannibal could get away with it, he'd shine a penlight into Will's eyes. "I called you several times but you didn't answer your phone."

"Shit," he said, giving Hannibal an apologetic smile. "I'm sorry, Hannibal, I must've fallen asleep."

He didn't think too deeply about the effort Hannibal put in to look for him. A part of him was warmed by the fact that Hannibal would even make the attempt.

"Have you not been sleeping well?"

“Not particularly,” Will said, taking a deep breath and getting to his feet. His case files and crime scene photographs were spread out over the entire table. It was maddening, partly because he knew that these were different killers. They weren’t working together. There was no connection. He just had to get other people to believe him and it was frustrating that he could see it so clearly and that others couldn’t. “There’s been an escalation in the Ripper killings this week. Jack’s been on my back about putting together a Ripper connection to the first killing, but there isn’t one.”

“The organ trafficking victim?” Hannibal said, walking to the table and looking at the photographs. “May I?”

“Sure,” Will said, waving for Hannibal to look his fill. “Maybe you can see something that I’ve missed. I’ve been staring at them all week. I feel like my brain is about to swell up and explode.”

Hannibal turned his head to gauge whether or not Will was joking. “Will.”

“I’m fine, just tired,” he said, covering his yawn with his hand.

He watched as Hannibal perused each of the different murders, his face carefully blank.

“I talked to the BAU team about organ harvesting. They think that it’s possible, except some of the organs that were taken were a little odd,” Will said, walking towards Hannibal and pointing to one of the victims. “The spleen was taken from this victim. Stomach from this one.”

“Not typically used for organ transplants,” Hannibal said, agreeing. He tapped his fingers on the photograph of Jason Murray. “Is the organ harvester hiding his work as the crimes of the Chesapeake Ripper or is the Ripper hiding his work as the crimes of an organ harvester?”

Will shook his head, taking a deep breath. “I’ve always said that the Ripper likes to perform. It’s art to him. But every brutal choice has elegance and grace.” He turned to look at the pictures, moving them side by side. Andrew Caldwell, Michelle Vocalson, Darrell

Ledgerwood, and Christopher Ward. “The mutilations are secondary; a humiliation forced on each victim. The Ripper is hiding the true nature of his crimes.”

Hannibal glowed with pride as he looked at Will. “And what is the true nature of his crimes?”

Will licked his lips, looking at Hannibal’s mouth. All he had to do was lean in and kiss him. “He eats them.”

Jack stalked into the lecture hall, his sharp eyes not missing the fact that Will was standing in Hannibal’s personal space. “Dr. Lecter, what a surprise.”

Hannibal acknowledged Jack with a warm smile as Will took a step back, feeling a little mortified at being caught by Jack. He ran a nervous hand through his hair, glancing quickly at Hannibal, who wasn’t perturbed one bit. Ever since they had started... *whatever* it was between them, neither of them had thought to define whatever *it* was.

“Good evening, Jack.”

“Will, we have a lead on the Ripper,” Jack said, then looked at Hannibal. “Care to help us catch a killer, Dr. Lecter?”

Hannibal’s lips curved into a small smile. “How could I refuse?”

*****

Somewhere in Southern Maryland

Later That Night

Jack turned around and waved his hand. “Dr. Lecter!”

Hannibal hurried towards Jack and Will watched as Hannibal stepped into the back of the ambulance without hesitation, shrugging out of his jacket and rolling up his sleeves.

"He was removing the kidney," Hannibal turned and told Jack. "Poorly. I can reattach it."

Jack nodded. "Do it."

Will watched as Hannibal found a pair of disposable sterile gloves, pulling them on expertly. He placed his hands into the incision area and dismissed Devon Silvestri completely, focused on the work he needed to do to save the victim's life. Will stepped back as the FBI Agents pulled the killer from the ambulance, Jack following them to one of the unmarked vehicles.

He couldn't take his eyes off of Hannibal.

Hannibal's bangs had fallen over his forehead, face blank as he concentrated on what he was doing.

Will thought about the kind of surgical precision the Chesapeake Ripper had in order to remove the organs from his victims. He thought about how the Ripper ate them, seeing the victims as nothing but pigs going to their slaughter. He thought about the sadistic and cruel imagination it took to display the bodies. He thought about the confidence and the competence it took to kill so many and to elude anyone searching for him.

Hannibal turned his head slightly and met Will's eyes, holding his look for only an instant, before turning back to what he was doing.

Will cocked his head slightly, opening himself up to read Hannibal, for just a moment, to take a quick look. Dr. Hannibal Lecter could fit the profile that Will keep in his head - a brilliant surgeon, a keen understanding of the human psyche, the control he kept over every aspect of his life, a passion for beauty that was as dark as it was decadent, an intelligent psychopath, the ultimate predator.

Will realized that he was hard.

Chapter 3

Hannibal Lecter's House

Saturday, April 14

Will was pressed over the low back gray leather chair in front of the blazing fire in the large fireplace, on his knees, with his wrists held captive behind his back with Hannibal's silk paisley necktie. He groaned loudly as Hannibal's hand tightened around the back of Will's neck, holding him down.

He had lost any sense of time, brought to the edge over and over again, only to be pulled back as Hannibal fucked him with slow, deep thrusts.

"Jesus, Hannibal, please! Please!"

He felt Hannibal's hands curl over his shoulders, pulling him back roughly so that he was upright, his bound hands between them, fingers caressing Hannibal's lower belly. Will let out a shuddering breath, his head falling on Hannibal's shoulder.

Hannibal's cock felt thick inside of him; Will could feel the rim of his asshole throbbing around Hannibal's girth, muscles squeezing and clenching around the hardness. He felt more than heard Hannibal's low moan against his back, Hannibal's soft chest hair brushing against his sweaty skin.

Will turned his head blindly, seeking a kiss and Hannibal's hand curled under his chin, tilting his head and kissing his mouth with tongue and teeth. The hand slid down his neck and curled around it, thumb pressing against the artery. Will could hear the blood rushing in his brain and he gasped against Hannibal's open mouth.

"Open your eyes and watch, Will," Hannibal murmured against his ear.

Will struggled to open his eyes, not knowing what he should be watching, until he caught their reflection in the tall, standing mirror in the corner of the room, turned slightly so that it was facing the chair and the edge of Hannibal's massive bed.

Hannibal's lips curved into a knowing smile, meeting Will's unsteady gaze in the mirror, and he began to fuck into him again with strong, hard thrusts.

"Come on. Do it. I know you want to," Will said, breathlessly, licking his dry lips.

He knew that Hannibal would understand what Will wanted. He always seemed to understand Will's needs.

The hand around his throat tightened, mercilessly cutting off his air, and Will let out a pathetic whine as he struggled helplessly against Hannibal's hold.

"It would be so easy," Hannibal whispered, sucking on his earlobe. "After two minutes, you'd fall into unconsciousness; after five minutes, you'd fall into a blackness that will take you without hope of revival."

Will felt his eyes roll back and his mouth opened, trying to find his breath, even for just a moment. His face was flushed and red, eyes bulging from the suffocation, and the only sounds between them was the slick, rough slap of Hannibal's body against Will as he ruthlessly drove his cock into Will.

God, the shame of it, how much Will wanted this and loved it.

"And you'd be mine forever, Will, existing in my memory palace until the end of days."

Hannibal released his neck and Will gasped, sucking in air as desperately as he needed to come. He flung his head back and cried out as Hannibal's hand slid down his stomach to wrap around Will's cock, stroking him quickly.

“Is that what you want, darling?” Hannibal husked, his thrusts quickening as his other arm curled around Will’s chest, bracing him against Hannibal’s body.

Will gritted his teeth and breathed roughly through his nose, bucking his hips forward into Hannibal’s hand and backwards onto Hannibal’s cock. “Oh fuck, Hannibal, I’m so close now, please, I’m so close.”

“Ask me nicely, darling,” Hannibal said, teeth pressed on the meaty part of his flesh where his neck met his shoulder.

“Please! Damn it! Please. *Please* let me come.”

Hannibal pushed him roughly so that Will’s chest was pressed against the top of the chair again, his hand relentless as he stroked him, fucking Will so hard that the chair was starting to tip backwards. Will squeezed his eyes shut, his mouth only good for making hoarse, guttural grunts of intense pleasure mixed in with just a touch of pain.

Will could feel it coming, his balls tightening and his ass clenching around Hannibal’s cock, muscles fluttering. He sucked in a deep breath and his entire body tensed up, shaking as pleasure rushed through his cock, up his spine, and seared his brain.

He barely heard and felt Hannibal come, finishing inside of him with a handful of hard thrusts that played havoc with Will’s pain/pleasure sensors, driving him into over-simulation. Will collapsed against the back of the chair, trembling in awe that his body even knew how to feel this kind of pleasure.

Hannibal sighed and fell against Will’s back, his hands stroking over Will’s sweaty head and up Will’s shaking thighs. “Oh, Will, I’m never going to get enough of you.”

Will panted with effort, taking Hannibal’s weight, and let loose a hiccuping laugh. “Jesus, Hannibal, I can’t stop shaking.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll take care of you,” he whispered, pressing gentle kisses over Will’s back, licking the sweat off his skin, and inhaling deeply.

Will moaned softly as Hannibal pulled his softening cock from inside of him. He felt Hannibal’s fingertips caress his throbbing hole, checking for tears. Will cried out when he felt one finger slip inside of him, part tease and part clinical.

Warm hands gently untied the necktie around Will’s wrists and Will let out a grateful groan, his numb arms falling limply to the leather chair under him. Hannibal checked his wrists and fingers, squeezing his hands. Will squeezed back and Hannibal took Will’s arm, pulling him off the chair to his feet.

“Let me help you to the bed,” Hannibal said, solicitously.

Will groaned and took the two steps to the bed, collapsing across it, blinking sleepily up at Hannibal. He watched as Hannibal grinned at him, nothing but affection on his face, hand stroking Will’s cheek.

“Rest. I’ll be right back,” he said, taking the soft velvet throw from the end of the bed and covering Will with it.

Will nodded and closed his eyes, catching his breath. He was so completely out of it, but it was just fine. His brain was quiet for once, and he could be present. He watched as Hannibal moved around the bedroom, picking up their clothes from the floor, and carefully dusting it off before setting it over the back of the other chair. Will snorted to himself about how fastidious Hannibal was, focusing on cleaning up their clothes before cleaning up the mess Will had left behind on the leather chair.

“It’s going to stain,” he murmured, gleefully.

Hannibal chuckled. “Fortunately, the leather was treated to withstand a number of difficult stains.”

At some point, Will must have dozed off because he woke to see the room turned to rights and Hannibal cleaning him with a warm, wet cloth.

“Hmmm...I’m feeling so decadent right now, rolling around naked on your bed,” Will commented, stretching his arms and legs as Hannibal watched him, amused. The room was warm from the fire and the lights were off, giving everything a cozy, safe glow.

“Then all is well in our world,” he said, smiling. Will couldn’t help but laugh and held out his hand, beckoning Hannibal closer.

Hannibal took his hand and joined him on the bed, laying in front of him. He propped his head up with his hand, the other stroking along Will’s chest.

“That night, when I was in the ambulance, you watched me. What were you thinking while you were watching me?”

Will dropped his face against the bed cover and laughed, a little embarrassed. “Let’s just say that I might have developed an empathy for competence kink. You were...extremely competent.”

Hannibal grinned, tucking his fingers under Will’s chin and lifting his face. “Were you aroused watching me work?”

“Talk about inappropriate boners,” he said, smiling. He turned on his back and closed his eyes, enjoying the feel of Hannibal’s hand as it smoothed down his chest to his stomach, just gently touching him. “Why did you stop being a surgeon?”

Hannibal sighed. “I killed someone.”

Will blinked and turned his head to meet Hannibal’s eyes.

“More accurately,” Hannibal continued, quirking the edge of his lips. “I couldn’t save someone. But it felt like killing them.”

Will was flooded with sympathy. “You were an emergency room surgeon. It had to happen from time to time.”

“It happened one time too many.”

“So you went from fixing bodies to fixing minds?”

“No one has died as a result of my therapy,” Hannibal said, grinning at him.

Will felt a sliver of something terrible, low in his belly. It felt like his gut was giving him insight to something that he had missed about the Chesapeake Ripper -- something that Hannibal helped loosen in his mind.

Hannibal pressed a kiss to Will’s shoulder and looked into his eyes.

There was no way that Hannibal could be the Ripper.

Will closed his eyes as Hannibal leaned closer, his hand stroking Will’s head, the kisses gentle and thorough.

Will turned on his side and wrapped his arm around Hannibal’s back, kissing him back. There was no way that Hannibal could be the Ripper.

Why was Will... *disappointed* by that?

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